

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Agar-Blunt-Onida  
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2002-2003**

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**Dates of On Site Visit:** January, 29, 2003

**Date of Report:** January 30, 2003

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This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Office of Special Education. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

<b>Promising Practice</b>	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
<b>Meets Requirements</b>	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
<b>Needs Improvement</b>	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
<b>Out of Compliance</b>	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
<b>Not applicable</b>	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

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<b>Principle 1 – General Supervision</b>
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

**Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Newspaper clippings
- Parent letters
- Posting of public flyers
- Child count documents

- Interagency agreements
- Child find folder
- District policy manual
- K-12 teacher binders
- Parent referral forms
- Personnel record forms
- Stanford achievement test
- School reports
- School and state attendance/drop out records

### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee concluded district procedures meet the requirements of child find. The district has an effective pre-referral system as noted in the district policy manual. More students are tested than qualify for special services. There are no district students enrolled in private schools. All children are included in the statewide assessment program. The goals and objectives for each student are aligned with the Agar-Blunt-Onida School District curriculum which is in turn aligned with the South Dakota content standards or functional standards. The district suspension and expulsion policies meet state and federal regulation. The district has employed fully certified personnel for all professional positions. The district has policies and procedures to supervise and evaluate all certified personnel. The district has adopted standards for the employment, roles/responsibilities and supervision of paraprofessionals.

### **Validation Results**

#### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meets requirement for general supervision as concluded by the steering committee.

## **Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education**

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Agar-Blunt-Onida budget
- Comprehensive plan
- Surveys
- Placement alternatives data
- Child find folder
- Early intervention exit information data
- Student files

#### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee concluded the district budget has set aside money to pay for occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, and transportation costs. Related services addressed in student

individual education programs are provided. The district comprehensive plan ensures that students who may be suspended or expelled are provided a free appropriate education.

### **Validation Results**

#### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements for free appropriate public education as concluded by the steering committee.

### **Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation**

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

#### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Student files
- Comprehensive plan
- Parent rights document
- Prior notice form
- Surveys
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#### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee concluded a team of people make decisions regarding evaluation and eligibility. Parent input is documented for each student; evaluations are conducted in all areas of suspected disability and the South Dakota eligibility criteria are used as a basis for determining eligibility. Prior notice/consent is obtained before evaluation/reevaluation and evaluation procedures, instruments and timelines meet minimum requirements. Parents are provided a copy of evaluation reports. Dismissals from special education are based upon evaluation results and classroom performance.

### **Validation Results**

#### **Out of Compliance**

##### **24:05:25:04 Evaluation procedures**

A variety of assessment tools and strategies used to gather relevant functional and developmental information about the child to determine eligibility and program placement.

##### **Cited from Functional Assessment for Special Education, February 5, 2002**

“Functional assessment results or summaries must be incorporated into some form of evaluation report. For example, the special educator in district may write a report that details both the standardized achievement assessments given as well as the functional assessment that was administered to the student. Other districts may choose to have the psychologist include all of the ability testing, standardized and achievement testing, and the functional assessment into one consolidated report. Another option is to summarize the functional assessment on a separated form made by the district. Functional assessment results or summaries are then incorporated into the student’s present levels of performance statement

within the IEP, with annual goals and short-term objectives/benchmarks developed based upon the student's present levels of performance".

#### 24:05:25:04.03. Determination of eligibility.

Upon completing the administration of tests and other evaluation materials as required by this chapter, the individual education program team and other individuals required by § 24:05:25:04.02 shall determine whether the student is a student with a disability, as defined in this article. The school district shall provide a copy of the evaluation report and the documentation of determination of eligibility to the parent.

Through a review of 8 student records, the monitoring team found the district staff did not analyze and develop an evaluation report of strength and needs for specific skill areas affected by the student's disability. The student's present levels of academic performance, their progress in the general curriculum or development of annual goals and short term instructional objectives therefore did not link to evaluation. Functional assessment information was available through a variety of sources in the district; however, there is not an established process across all grade levels and disciplines for analyzing, summarizing or integrating the information into the 25 day evaluation process for all eligible students.

### **Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards**

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

#### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Prior notice
- Data tables
- Comprehensive plan
- Parental rights brochure
- Individual education plan form
- Student child-find folder
- File reviews

#### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee concluded that parents are informed of their parental rights. The district has procedures within the comprehensive plan which meet the requirements of surrogate parent appointments. Parents have been informed of all relevant consent information in their native language. Parents have the opportunity to access and inspect applicable student records. The district comprehensive plan has policies and procedures for responding to complaint and due process hearings.

#### **Validation Results**

##### **Needs improvement**

#### 24:05:30:15. Surrogate parents.

The district superintendent or designee shall appoint surrogate parents. The district shall ensure a person selected as a surrogate has no interest that conflicts with the interest of the child the surrogate represents and has knowledge and skills that ensure representation of the child. The district is responsible for the

training and certification of surrogate parents and shall maintain a list of persons who may serve as surrogate parents.

Through interview and a review of one student record, the monitoring team found that district staff was unsure of the requirements for the appointment of a surrogate parent. Procedures for the appointment of a surrogate parent are in the district comprehensive plan; however, a list of persons who may serve as surrogate parents was not available.

## **Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program**

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Student files
- Parent surveys
- Teacher surveys
- Individual education plan form
- Comprehensive plan
- Student surveys

### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee concluded that the IEP team requirements and other identified responsibilities are met in a satisfactory manner. Written notice is provided for all individual education program (IEP) meetings and the IEP includes all required content. Transition plans are developed as a coordinated set of activities based on the transition needs of the student.

### **Validation Results**

#### **Needs improvement**

##### **ARSD 24:05:27:13:02 Transition services**

Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities. The coordinated set of activities shall be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, the acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

Through interview and a review of 3 student records, the monitoring team found transition goals and objectives were developed for service related activities rather than the skill areas affected by the disability. These goals and objectives were not written in an observable/measurable fashion since they were not based upon skills the student would be expected to learn. For example, "(Student) will narrow her career choices to fit her interests and needs." The initiation date and person responsible were occasionally excluded from the transition service plan. Transition components are present in the student records however, district needs to develop more consistent process for including the information in the individual education program.

**Out of compliance****24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program.**

The individual education program must include a statement of how parents will be regularly informed of their student's progress toward annual goals and the extent to which that progress is sufficient to enable the student to achieve the goals by the end of the year.

Through interview and a review of 4 student records, the monitoring team found that progress reports were provided to parents of students with disabilities in grades 7 through 12. These reports did not include information regarding student progress toward annual goals.

<b>Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment</b>
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After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

**Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Individual education plan form
- File reviews
- Comprehensive plan
- Data tables
- Parent surveys

**Meets requirements**

The steering committee concluded all children receive services in their least restrictive environment and have access to supports where required or beneficial.

**Validation Results****Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements for least restrictive environment as concluded by the steering committee.